

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 06673 01 OF 02 142144Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

IO-10 MC-02 ACDA-05 AID-05 /085 W

----- 020980

R 141737Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 186

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 6673

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, JA, CH, UR, US, XE

SUBJ: THE SOVIETS AND KOREA

1. SUMMARY. THE FALL OF INDOCHINA HAS GIVEN THE SOVIETS UNPARALLELED TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY IN ASIA. BUT KOREA IS NOT ONE OF THEM. FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS THE SOVITS HAVE CONSIDERED THE DANGERS IN KOREA MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THEIR POLICIES HAVE BEEN HIGHLY CAUTIOUS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HANOI'S ASCENDANCY IN INDOCHINA AND THE PERCEPTION OF REDUCED U.S. RESOLVE WILL MAKE THEM ANY LESS CAUTIOUS. WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD SUPPORT A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK ON THE SOUTH. INDEED WE BELIEVE THEY WOULD GO TO SOME LENGTHS TO RESTRAIN PYONGYANG FROM SUCH A COURSE, WHICH IN THEIR VIEW COULD HAVE THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 06673 01 OF 02 142144Z

MOST SERIOUS EFFECT ON THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.

AND COULD SPUR A DRIVE TOWARD MILITARISM IN JAPAN. NOR, FOR THE SAME REASONS, WOULD WE EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO ENCOURAGE ANY PYONGYANG-INDUCED INSTABILITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. MOSCOW, HOWEVER, WILL SEEK TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH PYONGYANG, INCLUDING-- BUT NOT RIGHT AWAY--RECEIVING A KIM IL SUNG VISIT. THE SOVIETS PROBABLY HAVE THE DESIRE, BUT MAY NOT HAVE THE LEVERAGE, TO ENCOURAGE PYONGYANG TOWARD A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WITH THE SOUTH. END SUMMARY.

2. KOREA IS A FOCAL POINT FOR GREAT POWER INTERESTS IN NORTH ASIA AND SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD KOREA ARE MAINLY FUNCTIONS OF MOSCOW'S RELATIONS WITH WASHINGTON, PEKING, AND TOKYO, RATHER THAN WITH PYONGYANG. THE SOVIETS PROBABLY VIEW THE DIVISION OF KOREA AS ARTIFICIAL, BUT THEY ARE IN NO HURRY TO ENCOURAGE A CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY OPPOSE ANY RENEWAL OF TENSIONS AT THIS TIME. EVEN BEFORE THE END OF THE KOREAN WAR, MOSCOW HAD IMPLICITLY ACCEPTED THE SEMI-PERMANENT DIVISION OF THE PENINSULA AND IN THE MEANTIME HAS NOT ENCOURAGED NEW NORTH-SOUTH TENSIONS. SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE 1972 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAN SIDES, MOSCOW HAS CONSISTENTLY EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR IT AND FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF "PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION." IT IS LIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE THIS SAME GENERAL POLICY FOR THE SAME BASIC REASON: RENEWED TENSIONS WOULD STIMULATE U.S. AND/OR JAPANESE RESPONSE WHICH COULD QUICKLY BRING EACH INTO CONFRONTATION WITH MOSCOW. THUS, IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE INDOCHINA DEBACLE, KOREA, FOR MOSCOW PRESENTS A VERY DIFFERENT PROSPECT THAN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN SOUTHEAST ASIA THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY FOCUSING ON THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES (SEPTIL); IN KOREA THEY ARE PROBABLY MAINLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE DANGER FLOWING FROM PYONGYANG'S INTEREST IN APPLYING HANOI'S LESSON.

3. WE SEE NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD ENCOURAGE OR EVEN ACQUIESCE IN A NORTH KOREAN ADVENTURE AGAINST SOUTH KOREA, EITHER OVERT OR COVERT. SUCH A COURSE WOULD STIMULATE IMMEDIATE U.S. AND JAPANESE CONCERN AND WOULD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 06673 01 OF 02 142144Z

RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. DESPITE SOME SURFACE SIMILARITIES, INDOCHINA IS NOT A COMPARABLE SITUATION IN SOVIET EYES. KOREA HAS NONE OF THE CIVIL WAR ASPECTS OF VIETNAM, AND A NEW OUTBREAK IN HOSTILITIES THERE WOULD FOLLOW MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF RELATIVE STABILITY. THE SOVIETS MUST ASSUME THAT, WHATEVER THE U.S. REACTION ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA ITSELF, THE OVERALL U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP

WOULD BE PUT IN THE MOST EXTREME JEOPARDY. THIS WOULD BE LESS TRUE IF THE ADVENTURE WERE COVERT, BUT WE ASSUME THAT PYONGYANG DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MOUNT A CONVINCING GUERRILLA WAR IN SOUTH KOREA, ALTHOUGH IT WILL CONTINUE TO SEIZE ON SIGNS OF UNREST UNDER THE PARK REGIME.

4. ALMOST AS PERTINENT FOR THE SOVIETS AS THE POTENTIAL U.S. RESPONSE WOULD BE THE LIKELY JAPANESE REACTION. INCREASED TENSION IN KOREA, COMBINED WITH DOUBTS ABOUT U.S. RESOLVE, SOUNDS TO US (BUT WE OF COURSE DEFER TO THOSE CLOSER TO THE JAPANESE SCENE) LIKE A QUICK RECIPE FOR DEBATE IN JAPAN ABOUT ITS OWN MILITARY NEEDS. SUCH A DEBATE COULD ONLY DISTURB THE PRESENT STATE OF COOL BUT CALM RELATIONS BETWEEN TOKYO AND MOSCOW, WITH DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE USSR'S LONG-TERM POLITICAL AND SECURITY INTERESTS NEXT TO ITS EASTERN BORDERS. IN OUR VIEW THE SOVIETS ARE FAIRLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR PRESENT RELATIONS WITH JAPAN. ECONOMIC TIES CONTINUE TO DEVELOP. POLITICAL RELATIONS ARE HAMPERED BY THE UNRESOLVED NORTHERN TERRITORIES QUESTION, BUT MOSCOW FEELS NO NEED TO SOLVE THAT PROBLEM SOON--AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE HOPED-FOR EMERGENCE OF A JAPANESE WILLY BRANDT WHO WOULD ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO ON THE TERRITORIES AND AGREE TO THE KIND OF OVERALL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHICH MOSCOW WOULD LIKE. IN ANY CASE, A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN KOREA IN PYONGYANG'S FAVOR MIGHT WELL REKINDLE THE FLAMES OF JAPANESE NATIONALISM AND MILITARISM--A PROSPECT WHICH MOSCOW WOULD VIEW WITH ALARM.

5. IN OUR VIEW, THEREFORE, SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT THE U.S. AND JAPANESE REACTION TO NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION OR EVEN OPEN SUBVERSION WOULD WEIGH DECISIVELY AGAINST ANY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 06673 01 OF 02 142144Z

ENCOURAGEMENT OR EVEN ACQUIESCENCE IN A NORTH KOREAN ATTEMPT TO DESTABILIZE THE SITUATION ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. INDEED, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD DO ALL THEY COULD TO DETER KIM IL SUNG FROM A MOVE AGAINST THE SOUTH.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ANTICIPATE THAT MOSCOW WILL SEEK CLOSER BILATERAL RELATIONS AND WILL INCREASE PROPAGANDA SUPPORT FOR NORTH KOREA, AN APPROACH WHICH COULD ALSO INCLUDE MORE FREQUENT AND HIGHER LEVEL EXCHANGES AND MORE AID. THE AIM WOULD BE TO RAISE MOSCOW'S INFLUENCE VIS-A-VIS PEKING'S BY DEMONSTRATION SOVIET SUPPORT FOR PYONGYANG WITHOUT NECESSARILY INCREASING TENSIONS IN THE AREA. KIM IL SUNG IS LIKELY TO BE INVITED TO MOSCOW, BUT AT A TIME WHEN HIS VISIT WOULD LOSE ANY CONNECTION

WITH THE DEBACLE IN INDOCHINA. ON THE PROPAGANDA FRONT, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE MORE ACTIVE SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTION AT THE UN THIS AUTUMN. IN RECENT YEARS MOSCOW HAS LET PEKING CARRY THE BALL TO DEFEAT ON THIS ISSUE, BUT LAST YEAR'S NEAR-WIN WILL PROBABLY LEAD TO A SHIFT IN SOVIET TACTICS TOWARD MORE ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR A RESOLUTION TO REMOVE THE UN FLAG FROM U.S. FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA, AND TO CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS. (THE LATTER, AS THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE CLEAR, WOULD BE AN UNGA "RECOMMENDATION," NOT A BINDING REQUIREMENT.)

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 06673 02 OF 02 142154Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

IO-10 MC-02 ACDA-05 AID-05 /085 W

----- 021003

R 141737Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 187

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 6673

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY ALSO ENCOURAGE MORE ACTIVE

STEPS TOWARD A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN KOREA, ALONG THE LINES BEGUN IN THE JULY 1972 NORTH-SOUTH UNDERSTANDING. SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD BE THE SUREST WAY TO REDUCE CHANCES OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE U.S. OR JAPAN OVER THE PENINSULA. HOWEVER, SOVIET LEVERAGE IS LIKELY TO REMAIN MARGINAL UNLESS MOSCOW CAN BUILD UP SOME CREDIT IN PYONGYANG VIA INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OR STEPPED-UP SUPPORT IN THE UN OR ELSEWHERE.

8. WHILE THE SOVIETS MAY GO FURTHER IN THE UN AND OTHER CONTEXTS TO CRITICIZE THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN KOREA AND THE REST OF ASIA, WE BELIEVE THEY CONSIDER AT LEAST A RESIDUAL U.S. PRESENCE AS A STABILIZING FACTOR.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 06673 02 OF 02 142154Z

IN NORTH ASIA MOSCOW PROBABLY REGARDS THE CONTINUED U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE AS A BULWARK AGAINST THE EXPANSION OF PRC INFLUENCE AND THE GROWTH OF JAPANESE MILITARISM. U.S. TROOPS IN SOUTH KOREA ITSELF ARE A DETERRENT TO A NORTH KOREAN ADVENTURE SOUTHWARDS. BUT DESPITE THE ANXIETY A FULL U.S. MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM ASIA WOULD CAUSE THEM, THE SOVIETS WOULD CERTAINLY DO NOTHING TO STOP IT IF INDIGENOUS ASIAN SENTIMENT COMBINED WITH U.S. PUBLIC OPINION TO MAKE IT LIKELY. IN THE KOREAN CONTEXT IN PARTICULAR, MOSCOW WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO RISK ITS REVOLUTIONARY CREDENTIALS OR ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH PYONGYANG BY TAKING A MORE MODERATE POSITION ON THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE.

9. IN ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, MOSCOW HAS BEEN CONTENT IN RECENT YEARS TO RUN A DISTANT SECOND TO PEKING IN TERMS OF VISIBLE INFLUENCE. CHO EN-LAI'S VISIT TO PYONGYANG IN 1970--HIS LAST TRIP OUTSIDE CHINA-- AND KIM IL SUNG'S TRIP TO PEKING LAST MONTH--HIS FIRST ABROAD IN 14 YEARS--SYMBOLIZE THE CLOSE AND FREQUENT SINO-NORTH KOREAN EXCHANGES AT EVERY LEVEL. BY CONTRAST SOVIET-NORTH KOREAN EXCHANGES HAVE BEEN NEITHER FREQUENT OR HIGH-LEVEL. MOSCOW'S RELATIONS WITH PYONGYANG HAVE ALSO BEEN HINDERED BY THE FEW FAINT SOVIET HINTS OF INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING SOME CONTACTS WITH SEOUL. THE INCIDENT AT THE WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES IN MOSCOW IN AUGUST 1973, WHERE THE NORTH KOREANS REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE WHEN A SOUTH KOREAN TEAM WAS GIVEN VISAS, WAS THE MOST DRAMATIC DEMONSTRATION OF PYONGYANG'S PIQUE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SOVIET AID TO NORTH KOREA IS ROUGHLY COMPARABLE TO CHINESE IN VALUE TERMS, PERHAPS EVEN A BIT HIGHER (WE WOULD APPRECIATE AN UPDATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT). BUT IS REPORTEDLY IS CONCENTRATED IN HIGH-VALUE INDUSTRIAL AND MILITARY GOODS RATHER THAN IN LOW-COST, HIGH-VISIBILITY PROJECTS WHICH TYPIFY PRC AID

TO MOST COUNTRIES. PYONGYANG'S RESORTED DEFAULT ON A CREDIT OF \$200 MILLION OR MOE TO A CONSORTIUM OF WESTERN BANKS PROBABLY EMBARRASSED THE SOVIETS BY GIVING COMMUNIST CREDIT-WORTHINESS A BAD NAME. COMING AT A TIME WHEN SOVIET BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SEEMS UNUSUALLY HEALTHY (WHILE PEKING'S IS WORSE THAN USUAL), THIS NORTH KOREAN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 06673 02 OF 02 142154Z

SETBACK MAY PROVIDE MOSCOW WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO BAIL PYONGYANG OUT--AT THE PRICE OF INCREASED SOVIET POLITICAL LEVERAGE. IN ANY CASE, AT THIS POINT WE SEE NO PROSPECT FOR THE SOVIETS TO ESTABLISH FORMAL OR INFORMAL TIES WITH THE ROK, UNLESS THEY HAVE A GREEN LIGHT FOR SUCH A MOVE FROM THE DPRK.

10. IN SUM, WE SEE NO SERIOUS LIKELIHOOD THAT MOSCOW WILL WANT TO CAPITALIZE IN NORTH ASIA ON OUR DEBACLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA OR THAT IT WILL ADOPT ANY KIND OF POLICY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA THAT COULD BE TERMED ADVENTURIST. INDEED, SOVIET ACQUIESCENCE IN A SECONDARY ROLE IN PYONGYANG MAY HAVE STEMMED FROM MOSCOW'S CONCERN THAT IT COULD NOT CONTROL KIM, AND THUS MAY REFLECT AN EFFORT NOT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH ANY ADVENTURE HE MIGHT UNDERTAKE. IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT OF UNCERTAINTY, HOWEVER, MOSCOW MAY SEEK GREATER INFLUENCE IN ORDER TO PUSH ITS MODERATE WISHES MORE EFFECTIVELY. IF SO, THEN THE U.S. HAS LITTLE TO FEAR FROM A CLOSER MOSCOW-PYONGYANG AXIS. THE SOVIETS CLEARLY VIEW THE TIDE IN ASIA AS MOVING IN THEIR DIRECTION. THE LAST THING THE KREMLIN WOULD WANT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IS A CONFRONTATION IN KOREA WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE NOT ONLY ITS GAINS IN ASIA, BUT ALSO WHAT IT REGARDS AS THE FRUITS WHICH HAVE BEEN GAINED WORLD-WIDE AS A RESULT OF BREZHNEV'S "PEACE POLICY" ADOPTED AT THE 24TH CPSU CONGRESS IN 1971.
STOESSEL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW06673
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750170-0096
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750553/aaaabwfw.tel
Line Count: 315
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <19 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE SOVIETS AND KOREA
TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, JA, CH, UR, US, XE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006